

Message Text

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43

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TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: GREEK OBSERVANCE OF ARMENIAN "MASSACRE"
ANNIVERSARY

1. THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TURKISH "SLAUGHTER OF ARMENIANS"--AS IT WAS WIDELY DUBBED IN GREEK NEWS MEDIA--WAS OBSERVED IN ATHENS APRIL 20 WITH A RALLY AT CONSTITUTION SQUARE, ATTENDED BY SEVERAL THOUSANDS, AND AT A MEETING IN A DOWNTOWN THEATER. MINISTER OF LABOR LASKARIS SPOKE AT THE THEATER MEETING ON BEHALF OF THE GOG; A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MAKARIOS WAS ALSO READ. EVERY GREEK POLITICAL PARTY WAS REPRESENTED AT THE MEETING BY A SPOKESMAN.

2. THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR THESE MAJOR WEEKEND EVENTS, AND SOME SMALLER SOCIAL GATHERINGS IN RECENT DAYS TO COMMEMORATE THE ARMENIAN EXODUS FROM TURKEY, WAS COMPOSED OF SEVERAL PRESTIGIOUS GREEKS INCLUDING FORMER PM KANELLOPOULOS, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY PROFESSOR CASSIMATIS, AND PROFESSOR OF LAW COUMANDIS. CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR KRANIDIOTIS WAS ALSO A MEMBER. RALLY

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AND THEATER GATHERING WERE GIVEN BRIEF TV COVERAGE.

3. COMMENT: MOST ARMENIANS RESIDENT HERE EMIGRATED TO GREECE FROM ANATOLIA IN THE 1915-21 PERIOD AND ARE NOW GREEK CITIZENS. IN ATHENS THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY CONSISTS OF ABOUT 5,000 WHO ARE SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY COMPACT AND ENJOY GOOD POLITICAL CONNECTIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH CONSERVATIVE DEPUTIES WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY RECEIVED THE ARMENIAN VOTE. THIS WEEKEND'S FOCUS ON ARMENIAN/TURKISH CONFLICT WAS PRECEDED EARLIER BY OCCASIONAL MEDIA REPORTS RETELLING TURKISH MASSACRES OF ARMENIANS AND ATTENTION TO ARMENIAN POLITICAL HISTORY AND CLAIMS IN ASIA MINOR. THESE EARLIER STORIES WERE USUALLY STIMULATED BY CYPRIOT AND KURDISH NEWS DEVELOPMENTS OF RECENT MONTHS.
KUBISCH

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